

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 00937 200404Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

(ISO) W

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R 191310Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3482

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 0937

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: DEFENSE MINISTER'S ASSERTION OF PERSONAL LOYALTY TO
MRS GANDHI RATHER THAN TO OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER

1. IN AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMENT TO A RALLY IN HARYANA JAN 18,
UNION DEFMIN BANSI LAL IS REPORTED BY PIT TO HAVE SAID THAT
HE WAS LOYAL TO MRS GANDHI PERSONALLY AND NOT TO THE
OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER. HE SAID HE WOULD REMAIN LOYAL
TO HER ALL HIS LIFE. ALL HIS STRENGTH CAME FROM THE
"BLESSINGS" OF MRS GANDHI. "OTHERWISE I AM ONE OF THE 600
MILLION LIVING IN THIS COUNTRY. WHATEVER TASKS SHE GIVES ME,
I DO IT (SIC) WITH DEDICATION."

2. COMMENT: ASIDE FROM RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS OATH OF
OFFICE TO THE CONSTITUTION AND PRESIDENT, THE DEFENSE
MINISTER'S REMARKS MAY WELL ALSO STRIKE A SOMEWHAT SOUR
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NOTE FOR THE OFFICERS OF THE INDIAN ARMY. EMBASSY AND

DAO OFFICERS WILL BE WATCHING FOR ANY INDICATION OF ANNOY-
ANCE OR CONCERN WITHIN THE INDIAN MILITARY TO BANSI LAL'S
SUGGESTION THAT HIS ORDERS TO THEM MAY RELATE MORE
DIRECTLY TO MRS GANDHI'S PERSONAL INTERESTS THAN TO THOSE
OF THE STATE. THERE IS, OF COURSE, THE EQUALLY INTRIGUING
POSSIBILITY THAT OTHER MINISTERS MAY BEGIN TO OFFER
SIMILAR PROFESSIONS OF PERSONAL LOYALTY TO MRS GANDHI
AS WELL.
SAXBE

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